forwarding a response to the query from a second user over the data network, the second user being a member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive to the query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system controlled at least in part by the second user.

2. (*cancelled*)

3. (*amended*) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

forwarding the query to a second set of users, each user of the second set of users accessible by the second user when there is no response received from the first set of users;

receiving a response from a third user, the third user being a member of the second set of users, the response including information responsive to the query from a public portion of a system controlled at least in part by the third user; and

forwarding the response to the first user.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising:
adding the third user to the first set of users.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein:
the second set of users dynamically formed such that the second set of users has no intersection with the first set of users.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein:
The query includes a list of users known to have had the query sent to each user of the list of users.

7. The method of claim 4 wherein:
the query includes a timestamp indicating when the query was originated and further comprising discarding queries received at a time later than the timestamp plus a predetermined length of time.

8. (*cancelled*)

9. (*cancelled*)

A3

10. (*amended*) A system comprising:

means for receiving a query to a first set of users accessible by a first user via a data network, the query including information relevant to a request for information and the first set of users being on the data network when the query is sent; and

means for providing a response to the query from a second user, the second user being a member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive to the query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system controlled at least in part by the second user.

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11. (*cancelled*)

A4

12. (*amended*) The system of claim 10 further comprising:

means for forwarding the query to a second set of users, each user of the second set of users accessible by the second user;

means for receiving a response from a third user, the third user a member of the second set of users, the response including information responsive to the query from a public portion of a system; and

the means for providing including Means for Forwarding the response from the third user to the first user.

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13. The system of claim 12 further comprising:

means for adding the third user to the first set of users.

10 14. (*amended*) A machine-readable medium embodying instructions for execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the processor to perform acts comprising:

sending a query to a first set of users accessible by a first user via a data network, the query including information relevant to a request for information and the first set of users being on the data network when the query is sent; and

receiving a response to the query from a second user, the second user a member of the first set of users, the response including information responsive to the query, the information accessible in a public portion of a system controlled at least in part by the second user.

15. (*cancelled*)

11 16. (*amended*) The machine-readable medium of claim 10 further embodying instructions for execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the processor to perform acts further comprising:

forwarding the query to a second set of users, each user of the second set of users accessible by the second user;

receiving a response from a third user, the third user a member of the second set of users, the response including information responsive to the query from a public portion of a system; and

forwarding the response to the first user.

17. (*amended*) The machine-readable medium of claim 11 further embodying instructions for execution by a processor, the instructions, when executed by the processor, causing the processor to perform acts further comprising:

adding the third user to the first set of users.

18. (*amended*) The machine-readable medium of claim 12 wherein:

the second set of users dynamically formed such that the second set of users has no intersection with the first set of users; and

the query includes a list of users known to have had the query sent to each user of the list of users.

19. (*amended*) The machine-readable medium of claim 17, wherein:

the query includes a timestamp indicating when the query was originated and further comprising discarding queries received at a time later than the timestamp plus a predetermined length of time.

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20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (cancelled)

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23. (*newly added*) A system comprising:

a first computer associated with a first user and sending out a query request;

a group of second computers respectively associated with a group of second users and all receiving the query request from the first computer, wherein the first computer is coupled to a data network and all of the second computers are coupled to the data network at a time the query request is made by the first user from the first computer, each of the second computers determines if the each of the second possesses information pertaining to the query request; and

wherein, when one of the second computers determines that the one of the second computers possesses the information, a response is provided to the first computer, the response includes link data to the information such that the first computer can obtain the information directly from the one of the second computers.

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24. The system of claim 23, wherein the first computer and the second computers form a community sharing public information.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein, when each of the second computers determines that the each of the second computers does not possess the information, a new search query is generated from one of the second computers that has access to another community including a group of third computers, and wherein the one of the second computers forwards a response to the first computer when one of the third computers possesses the required information.

26. The system of claim 25, wherein the one of the third computers joins the community to share the public information.

Remarks

Claims 1-22 were submitted for examination. In the Office Action, Claims 1-2, 8-11, 14-15 and 20-21 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Kanoh et al (US Pat. No.: 5,873,077), and Claims 3-7, 12-13, 16-19 and 22 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanoh et al (US Pat. No.: 5,873,077) which is now referred to Kanoh hereinafter.

In the foregoing amendments, Claims 2, 8-9, 11, 15 and 20-22 have been cancelled without prejudice, Claims 1, 3, 10, 12, 14, and 16-19 have been amended, and Claims 23-26 are newly added. No new matters are introduced. As a result of the foregoing amendments, Claims 1, 3-7, 10, 12-14, 16-19 and 23-26 are now pending. Reconsideration of Claims 1, 3-7, 10, 12-14, 16-19 and 23-26 is respectfully requested based on the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Patentability of the Claimed Invention

Different from a popular search engine, such as Yahoo, the claim invention teaches a live search system in which every search request is lively searched among a group of users (i.e., their respective computers), which means these users must be on the network at the time a search query is sent. When information